

Elliot

THE
GODS OF GREECE,
ITALY AND INDIA.
BY
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ON

THE GODS OF GREECE, ITALY, AND INDIA,

(WRITTEN IN 1784, AND SINCE REVISED,)

BY

THE PRESIDENT.

WE cannot justly conclude, by arguments preceding the proof of facts, that one idolatrous people must have borrowed their deities, rites, and tenets from another ; since Gods of all shapes and dimensions may be framed by the boundless powers of imagination, or by the frauds and follies of men, in countries never connected ; but, when features of resemblance, too strong to have been accidental, are observable in different systems of polytheism, without fancy or prejudice to colour them and improve the likeness, we can scarce help believing, that some connection has immemorially subsisted between the several nations, who have adopted them : it is my design in this essay, to point out such a resemblance between the popular worship of the old *Greeks* and *Italians* and that of the *Hindus* ; nor can there be room to doubt of a great similarity between their strange religions and that of *Egypt*, *China*, *Persia*, *Phrygia*, *Phœnix*, *Syria* ; to which, perhaps, we may safely add some of the southern kingdoms and even islands of *America* ; while the *Gothick* system, which prevailed in the northern regions of

Europe, was not merely similar to those of *Greece* and *Italy*, but almost the same in another dress with an embroidery of images apparently *Asiatick*. From all this, if it be satisfactorily proved, we may infer a general union or affinity between the most distinguished inhabitants of the primitive world, at the time when they deviated, as they did too early deviate, from the rational adoration of the only true GOD.

There seem to have been four principal sources of all mythology. I. Historical, or natural, truth has been perverted into fable by ignorance, imagination, flattery, or stupidity; as a king of *Crete*, whose tomb had been discovered in that island, was conceived to have been the *Gol* of *Olympus*, and *MINOS*, a legislator of that country, to have been his son, and to hold a supreme appellate jurisdiction over departed souls; hence too probably flowed the tale of *CADMUS*, as BOCHART learnedly traces it; hence beacons or volcanos became one-eyed giants and monsters vomiting flames; and two rocks, from their appearance to mariners in certain positions, were supposed to crush all vessels attempting to pass between them; of which idle fictions many other instances might be collected from the *Odyssey* and the various *Argonautick* poems. The less we say of *Julian* stars, deifications of princes or warriours, altars raised, with those of *APOLLO*, to the basest of men, and divine titles bestowed on such wretches as *CAJUS OCTAVIANTS*, the less we shall expose the infamy of grave senators and fine poets, or the brutal folly of the low multitude: but we may be assured, that the mad apotheosis of truly great men, or of little men falsely called great, has been the origin of gross idolatrous errors in every part of the pagan world. II. The next source of them appears to have been a wild admiration of the heavenly bodies, and, after a time, the systems and calculations of Astronomers: hence came a considerable portion of *Egyptian* and *Grecian* fable; the *Sabian* worship in *Arabia*; the *Persian* types and emblems of *Mihr* or the sun, and the far extended adoration of the elements and the powers of nature; and hence perhaps, all the artificial Chronology of the *Chinese* and *Indians*, with the invention of demigods and

heroes to fill the vacant niches in their extravagant and imaginary periods. III. Numberless divinities have been created solely by the magick of poetry ; whose essential business it is, to personify the most abstract notions, and to place a nymph or a genius in every grove and almost in every flower : hence *Hygieia* and *Faso*, health and remedy, are the poetical daughters of *ÆSCULAPIUS*, who was either a distinguished physician, or medical skill personified ; and hence *Chloris*, or verdure, is married to the *Zephyr*. IV. The metaphors and allegories of moralists and metaphysicians have been also very fertile in Deities ; of which a thousand examples might be adduced from *PLATO*, *CICERO*, and the inventive commentators on *HOMER* in their pedigrees of the Gods, and their fabulous lessons of morality : the richest and noblest stream from this abundant fountain is the charming philosophical tale of *Psycie*, or the *Progress of the Soul* ; than which, to my taste, a more beautiful, sublime, and well supported allegory was never produced by the wisdom and ingenuity of man. Hence also the *Indian* *MA'YA'*, or, as the word is explained by some *Hindu* scholars, “ the first inclination of the God-head to diversify himself (such is their phrase) by creating worlds,” is feigned to be the mother of universal nature, and of all the inferior Gods ; as a *Cashmirian* informed me, when I asked him, why *CA'MA*, or *Love*, was represented as her son ; but the word *MA'YA'*, or *delusion*, has a more subtle and recondite sense in the *Ve'da'nta* philosophy, where it signifies the system of *perceptions*, whether of secondary or of primary qualities, which the Deity was believed by *EPICHARMUS*, *PLATO*, and many truly pious men, to raise by his omnipresent spirit in the minds of his creatures, but which had not, in their opinion, any existence independent of mind.

In drawing a parallel between the Gods of the *Indian* and *European* heathens, from whatever source they were derived, I shall remember, that nothing is less favourable to enquiries after truth than a systematical spirit, and shall call to mind the saying of a *Hindu* writer, “ that whoever obstinately adheres to any set of opinions, may bring himself to believe that the freshest

sandal-wood is a flame of fire :" this will effectually prevent me from insisting, that such a God of *India* was the JUPITER of *Greece*; such, the APOLLO ; such, the MERCURY : in fact, since all the causes of polytheism contributed largely to the assemblage of *Grecian* divinities (though BACON reduces them all to refined allegories, and NEWTON to a poetical disguise of true history), we find many JOVES, many APOLLOS, many MERCURIES, with distinct attributes and capacities ; nor shall I presume to suggest more, than that, in one capacity or another, there exists a striking similitude between the chief objects of worship in ancient *Greece* or *Italy* and in the very interesting country, which we now inhabit.

The comparison, which I proceed to lay before you, must needs be very superficial, partly from my short residence in *Hindustan*, partly from my want of complete leisure for literary amusements, but principally because I have no *European* book, to refresh my memory of old fables, except the conceited, though not unlearned, work of POMEY, entitled the *Pantheon*, and that so miserably translated, that it can hardly be read with patience. A thousand more strokes of resemblance might, I am sure, be collected by any, who should with that view peruse HESIOD, HYGINUS, CORNUTUS and the other mythologists ; or, which would be a shorter and a pleasanter way, should be satisfied with the very elegant *Syntagma* of LILIUS GIRALDUS.

Disquisitions concerning the manners and conduct of our species in early times, or indeed at any time, are always curious at least and amusing ; but they are highly interesting to such, as can say of themselves with CHREMES in the play, " We are men, and take an interest in all that relates to mankind :" They may even be of solid importance in an age, when some intelligent and virtuous persons are inclined to doubt the authenticity of the accounts, delivered by MOSES, concerning the primitive world ; since no modes or sources of reasoning can be unimportant, which have a tendency to remove such doubts. Either the first eleven chapters of *Genesis*, all due allowances being made for a figurative Eastern style, are true, or the whole fabrick of our

national religion is false ; a conclusion, which none of us, I trust, would wish to be drawn. I, who cannot help believing the divinity of the MESSIAH, from the undisputed antiquity and manifest completion of many prophesies, especially those of ISAIAH, in the only person recorded by history, to whom they are applicable, am obliged of course to believe the sanctity of the venerable books, to which that sacred person refers as genuine ; but it is not the truth of our national religion, as such, that I have at heart : it is truth itself ; and, if any cool unbiassed reasoner will clearly convince me, that MOSES drew his narrative through *Egyptian* conduits from the primeval fountains of *Indian* literature, I shall esteem him as a friend for having weeded my mind from a capital error, and promise to stand among the foremost in assisting to circulate the truth, which he has ascertained. After such a declaration, I cannot but persuade myself, that no candid man will be displeased, if, in the course of my work, I make as free with any arguments, that he may have advanced, as I should really desire him to do any of mine, that he may be disposed to controvert. Having no system of my own to maintain, I shall not pursue a very regular method, but shall take all the Gods, of whom I discourse, as they happen to present themselves ; beginning, however, like the *Romans* and the *Hindus*, with JANU or GANE'SA.

The titles and attributes of this old *Italian* deity are fully comprised in two choriambick verses of SULPITIUS : and a further account of him from OVID would here be superfluous :

Jane pater, Jane tuens, dive biceps, biformis,
O cate rerum sator, O principium deorum !

“ Father JANUS, all-beholding JANUS, thou divinity with two heads, and with two forms ; O sagacious planter of all things, and leader of deities ! ”

He was the God, we see, of *wisdom* ; whence he is represented on coins with *two*, and, on the *Hetruscan* image found at *Falisci*, with *four*, faces ; emblems of prudence and circumspection : this is GANE'SA, the God of *wisdom* in *Hindustan*, painted with an *Elephant's* head, the symbol of sagacious discernment, and at-

tended by a favourite *rat*, which the *Indians* consider as a wise and provident animal. His next great character (the plentiful source of many superstitious usages) was that, from which he is emphatically styled *the father*, and which the second verse before-cited more fully expresses, *the origin and founder of all things*; whence this notion arose, unless from a tradition that he first built shrines, raised altars, and instituted sacrifices, it is not easy to conjecture; hence it came however, that his name was invoked before any other God; that, in the old sacred rites, corn and wine, and, in later times, incense also, were first offered to *JANUS*; that the *doors* or *entrances* to private houses were called *Januae*, and any pervious passage or thorough-fare, in the plural number, *Jani*, or *with two beginnings*; that he was represented holding a rod as guardian of ways, and a key, as *opening*, not gates only, but *all important works and affairs* of mankind; that he was thought to preside over the morning, or *beginning of day*; that, although the *Roman* year began regularly with *March*, yet the eleventh month, named *Januarius*, was considered as *first* of the twelve, whence the whole year was supposed to be under his guidance, and opened with great solemnity by the consuls inaugurated in his fane, where his statue was decorated on that occasion with fresh laurel; and, for the same reason, a solemn denunciation of war, than which there can hardly be a more momentous national act, was made by the military consul's opening the gates of his temple with all the pomp of his magistracy. The twelve altars and twelve chapels of *JANUS* might either denote, according to the general opinion, that he leads and governs twelve months, or that, as he says of himself in *OVID*, all entrance and access must be made through him to the principal Gods, who were, to a proverb, of the same number. We may add, that *JANUS* was imagined to preside over infants at their birth, or the *beginning* of life.

The *Indian* divinity has precisely the same character: all sacrifices and religious ceremonies, all addresses even to superiour Gods, all serious compositions in writing, and all worldly affairs of moment, are begun by pious *Hindus* with an invocation of

GANE'SA ; a word composed of *i'sa*, the *governor* or *leader*, and *gan'a*, or *a company* of deities, *nine* of which companies are enumerated in the *Amare'śh*. Instances of opening business auspiciously by an ejaculation to the JANUS of *India* (if the lines of resemblance here traced will justify me in so calling him) might be multiplied with ease. Few books are begun without the words *salutation* to GANE'S, and he is first invoked by the *Bra'hmans*, who conduct the trial by ordeal, or perform the ceremony of the *hō'ma*, or sacrifice to fire: M. SONNERAT represents him as highly revered on the Coast of *Coromandal*; “where the *Indians*, he says, would not on any account build a house, without having placed on the ground an image of this deity, which they sprinkle with oil and adorn every day with flowers; they set up his figure in all their temples, in the streets, in the high roads, and in open plains at the foot of some tree; so that persons of all ranks may invoke him, before they undertake any business, and travellers worship him, before they proceed on their journey.” To this I may add, from my own observation, that in the commodious and useful town, which now rises at *Dharmatranya* or *Gaya*, under the auspices of the active and benevolent THOMAS LAW, Esq. collector of *Rotas*, every new-built house, agreeably to an immemorial usage of the *Hindus*, has the name of GANE'SA superscribed on its door; and, in the old town, his image is placed over the gates of the temples.

We come now to SATURN, the oldest of the pagan Gods, of whose office and actions much is recorded. The jargon of his being the son of Earth and of Heaven, who was the son of the Sky and the Day, is purely a confession of ignorance, who were his parents or who his predecessors; and there appears more sense in the tradition said to be mentioned by the inquisitive and well informed PLATO, “that both SATURN or *time*, and his consort CYBELE, or the *Earth*, together with their attendants, were the children of *Ocean* and *Thetis*, or, in less poetical language, sprang from the waters of the great deep.” CERES, the goddess of harvests, was, it seems, their daughter; and VIRGIL describes “the mother and nurse of all as crowned with turrets, in a car

drawn by lions, and exulting in her hundred grandsons, all divine, all inhabiting splendid celestial mansions." As the God of time, or rather as *time* itself personified, SATURN was usually painted by the heathens holding a scythe in one hand, and, in the other, a snake with its tail in its mouth, the symbol of perpetual cycles and revolutions of ages: he was often represented in the act of devouring years, in the form of children, and, sometimes, encircled by the seasons appearing like boys and girls. By the *Latins* he was named SATUNNUS; and the most ingenious etymology of that word is given by FESTUS the grammarian; who traces it, by a learned analogy to many similar names, *a' satu*, from planting, because, when he reigned in *Italy*, he introduced and improved agriculture: but his distinguishing character, which explains, indeed, all his other titles and functions, was expressed allegorically by the stern of a ship or galley on the reverse of his ancient coins; for which OVID assigns a very unsatisfactory reason, "because the divine stranger arrived in a ship on the *Italian* coast;" as if he could have been expected on horse-back or hovering through the air.

The account, quoted by POMEY from ALEXANDER POLYHISTOR, casts a clearer light, if it really came from genuine antiquity, on the whole tale of SATURN; "that he predicted an extraordinary fall of rain, and ordered the construction of a vessel, in which it was necessary to secure men, beasts, birds, and reptiles from a general inundation."

Now it seems not easy to take a cool review of all these testimonies concerning the birth, kindred, offspring, character, occupations, and entire life of SATURN, without assenting to the opinion of BOCHART, or admitting it at least to be highly probable, that the fable was raised on the true history of NOAH; from whose flood a new period of *time* was computed, and a new series of ages may be said to have sprung; who rose fresh, and, as it were, newly born from the waves; whose wife was in fact the universal mother, and, that the earth might soon be repeopled, was early blessed with numerous and flourishing descendants: if we produce, therefore, an *Indian* king of divine birth,

eminent for his piety and beneficence, whose story seems evidently to be that of NOAH disguised by *Asiatic* fiction, we may safely offer a conjecture, that he was also the same personage with SATURN. This was MENU, or SATYAVRATA, whose pratronymic name was VAIVASWATA, or child of the SUN ; and whom the *Indians* believed to have reigned over the whole world in the earliest age of their chronology, but to have resided in the country of *Dravira*, on the coast of the Eastern *Indian* Peninsula : the following narrative of the principal event in his life I have literally translated from the *Bhagvat* ; and it is the subject of the first *Pura'na*, entitled that of the *Matsya*, or *fish*.

‘Desiring the preservation of herds, and of *Brahmans*, of genii and virtuous men, of the *Ve'das*, of law, and of precious things, the lord of the universe assumes many bodily shapes ; but though he pervades, like the air, a variety of beings, yet he is himself unvaried, since he has no quality subject to change. At the close of the last *Calpa*, there was a general destruction occasioned by the sleep of BRAHMA' ; whence his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a vast ocean. BRAHMA', being inclined to slumber, desiring repose after a lapse of ages, the strong demon HAYAGRI'VA came near him, and stole the *Ve'das*, which had flowed from his lips. When HERI, the preserver of the universe, discovered this deed of the Prince of *Da'naras*, he took the shape of a minute fish, called *sap'hari*'. A holy king, named SATYAVRATA, then reigning ; a servant of the spirit, which moved on the waves, and so devout, that water was his only sustenance. He was the child of the Sun, and, in the present *Calpa*, is invested by NARAYAN in the office of *Menu*, by the name of SRA'DDHAD'EVA, or the God of Obsequies. One day, as he was making a libation in the river *Critumala'*, and held water in the palm of his hand, he perceived a small fish moving in it. The king of *Dravira* immediately dropped the fish into the river together with the water, which he had taken from it ; when the *sap'hari*' thus pathetically addressed the benevolent monarch : “ How canst thou, O king, who shovest affection to the oppressed, leave me in this river-water,

The saints thus addressed him : “O king, meditate on CESAVA’ ; who will, surely, deliver us from this danger, and grant us prosperity.” The God, being invoked by the monarch, appeared again distinctly on the vast ocean in the form of a fish, blazing like gold, extending a million of leagues, with one stupendous horn ; on which the king, as he had before been commanded by HERI, tied the ship with a cable made of a vast serpent, and, happy in his preservation, stood praising the destroyer of MADHU. When the monarch had finished his hymn, the primeval male, BHAGAVAT, who watched for his safety on the great expanse of water, spoke aloud to his own divine essence, pronouncing a sacred *Pura’na*, which contained the rules of the *Sa’nc’hyā* philosophy : but it was an infinite mystery to be concealed within the breast of SATYAVRATA ; who, sitting in the vessel with the saints, heard the principle of the soul, the Eternal Being, proclaimed by the preserving power. Then HERI, rising together with BRAHMA’, from the destructive deluge, which was abated, slew the demon HAYAGRI’VA, and recovered the sacred books. SATYAVRATA, instructed in all divine and human knowledge, was appointed in the present *Calpa*, by the favour of VISHNU, the seventh MENU, surnamed VAIWASWATA : but the appearance of a horned fish to the religious monarch was *Ma’ya*, or delusion, and he, who shall devoutly hear this important allegorical narrative, will be delivered from the bondage of sin.’

This epitome of the first *Indian History*, that is now extant, appears to me very curious and very important ; for the story, though whimsically dressed up in the form of an allegory, seems to prove a primeval tradition in this country of the *universal deluge* described by Moses, and fixes consequently the *time*, when the genuine *Hindu Chronology* actually begins. We find, it is true, in the *Pura’n*, from which the narrative is extracted, *another deluge* which happened towards the close of the *third age*, when YUDHISTHIR was labouring under the persecution of his inveterate foe DURYODHAN, and when CRISHNA, who had recently become incarnate for the purpose of succouring the pious and of destroying the wicked, was performing wonders in the country

of *Mathura* ; but the second flood was merely *local* and intended only to affect the people of *Vraja* : they, it seems, had offended INDRA, the God of the firmament, by their enthusiastic adoration of the wonderful child, who lifted up the mountain *Govardhena*, as if it had been a flower, and, by sheltering all the herdsmen and shepherdesses from the storm, convinced INDRA of his supremacy." That the *Satya*, or (if we may venture so to call it) the *Saturnian*, age was in truth the age of the *general* flood, will appear from a close examination of the ten *Avata'rs*, or *Descents*, of the deity in his capacity of preserver ; since of the four, which are declared to have happened in the *Satya yug*, the *three first* apparently relate to some stupendous convulsion of our globe from the fountains of the deep, and the fourth exhibits the miraculous punishment of pride and impiety : first, and we have shown, there was, in the opinion of the *Hindus*, an interposition of Providence to preserve a devout person and his family (for all the *Pandits* agree, that his wife, though not named, must be understood to have been saved with him) from an inundation, by which all the wicked were destroyed ; next, the power of the deity descends in the form of a *Boar*, the symbol of strength, to draw up and support on his tusks the whole earth, which had been sunk beneath the ocean ; thirdly, the same power is represented as a *tortoise* sustaining the globe, which had been convulsed by the violent assaults of demons, while the Gods churned the sea with the mountain *Mandar*, and forced it to disgorge the sacred things and animals, together with the water of life, which it had swallowed : these three stories relate, I think, to the same event, shadowed by a moral, a metaphysical, and an astronomical, allegory ; and all three seem connected with the hieroglyphical sculptures of the old *Egyptians*. The fourth *Avata'r* was a *lion* issuing from a bursting column of marble to devour a blaspheming monarch, who would otherwise have slain his religious son ; and of the remaining six, not one has the least relation to a deluge : the three, which are ascribed to the *Tre'ta'yug*, when tyranny and irreligion are said to have been introduced, were ordained for the overthrow of Tyrants, or, their natural

types, Giants with a thousand arms formed for the most extensive oppression ; and, in the *Dra'paryug*, the incarnation of CRISHNA was partly for a similar purpose, and partly with a view to thin the world of unjust and impious men, who had multiplied in that age, and began to swarm on the approach of the *Caliyug*, or the age of *contention* and baseness. As to BUDDHA, he seems to have been a reformer of the doctrines contained in the *Ve'das* ; and, though his good nature led him to censure those ancient books, because they enjoined sacrifices of cattle, yet he is admitted as the ninth *Avata'r* even by the *Bra'mans* of *Ca'si'* and his praises are sung by the poet JAYADE'VA: his character is in many respects very extraordinary; but, as an account of it belongs rather to History than to Mythology, it is reserved for another dissertation. The tenth *Avata'r*, we are told, is yet to come, and is expected to appear mounted (like the crowned conqueror in the *Apocalyps*) on a white horse, with a cimeter blazing like a comet to mow down all incorrigible and impenitent offenders, who shall then be on earth.

These four *Yugs* have so apparent an affinity with the *Grecian* and *Roman* ages, that one origin may be naturally assigned to both systems: the first in both is distinguished as abounding in *gold*, though *Satya* mean *truth* and *probity*, which were found, if ever, in the times immediately following so tremendous an exertion of the divine power as the destruction of mankind by a general deluge; the next is characterized by *silver*, and the third, by *copper*; though their usual names allude to proportions imagined in each between vice and virtue: the present, or *earthen*, age seems more properly discriminated than by *iron*, as in ancient *Europe*; since that metal is not baser or less useful, though more common in our times and consequently less precious, than copper ; while mere *earth* conveys an idea of the lowest degradation. We may here observe, that the true History of the World seems obviously divisible into *four* ages or periods ; which may be called, first, the *Diluvian*, or purest age ; namely, the times preceding the deluge, and those succeeding it till the mad introduction of idolatry at *Babel*; next, the *Patriarchal*, or

pure, age; in which, indeed, there were mighty hunters of beasts and of men, from the rise of patriarchs in the family of SEM to the simultaneous establishment of great Empires by the descendants of his brother HA'M; thirdly, the *Mosaic*, or less pure, age; from the legation of MOSES, and during the time, when his ordinances were comparatively well-observed and uncorrupted; lastly, the *Prophetical* or *impure*, age, begining with the vehement warnings given by the Prophets to apostate Kings and degenerate nations, but still subsisting and to subsist, until all genuine prophecies shall be fully accomplished. The duration of the Historical ages must needs be very unequal and disproportionate; while that of the *Indian Yugs* is disposed so regularly and artificially, that it cannot be admitted as natural or probable: men do not become reprobate in a geometrical progression or at the termination of regular periods; yet so well-proportioned are the *Yugs*, that even the length of human life is diminished, as they advance, from an hundred thousand years in a subdecuple ratio; and, as the number of principal *Avata'rs* in each decreases arithmetically from four, so the number of years in each decreases geometrically, and all together constitute the extravagant sum of four million three hundred and twenty thousand years, which aggregate, multiplied by seventy-one, is the period, in which every MENU is believed to preside over the world. Such a period, one might conceive, would have satisfied ARCHYTAS, the *measurer of sea and earth and the number of their sands*, or ARCHIMEDES, who invented a notation, that was capable of expressing the number of them; but the comprehensive mind of an *Indian Chronologist* has no limits; and the reigns of fourteen MENUS are only a single day of BRAHMA', fifty of which days have elapsed, according to the *Hindus*, from the time of the Creation: that all this puerility, as it seems at first view, may be only an astronomical riddle, and allude to the apparent revolution of the fixed stars, of which the *Brahmans* made a mystery, I readily admit, and am even inclined to believe; but so technical an arrangement excludes all idea of serious History. I am sensible, how much these remarks will offend the warm advocates for

Indian antiquity ; but must not sacrifice truth to a base fear of giving offence : that the *Vēdas* were actually written before the flood, I shall never believe ; nor can we infer from the preceding story, that the learned *Hindus* believe it ; for the allegorical slumber of BRAHMA' and the theft of the sacred books mean only, in simpler language, that the *human race was become corrupt* ; but that the *Vēdas* are very ancient, and far older than other *Sanskrit* compositions, I will venture to assert from my own examination of them, and a comparison of their style with that of the *Pura'ns* and the *Dherma Sa'stra*. A similar comparison justifies me in pronouncing, that the excellent law-book ascribed to SWĀ'y-AMBHUVA MENU, though not even pretended to have been written by him, is more ancient than the BHAGAVAT ; but that it was composed in the first age of the world, the *Brahmans* would find it hard to persuade me ; and the date, which has been assigned to it, does not appear in either of the two copies, which I possess, or in any other, that has been collated for me : in fact the supposed date is comprised in a verse, which flatly contradicts the work itself ; for it was not MENU who composed the system of law, by the command of his father BRAHMA', but a holy personage or demigod, named BHIRIGU, who revealed to men what MENU had delivered at the request of him and other saints or patriarchs. In the *Ma'nava Sa'stra*, to conclude this digression, the measure is so uniform and melodious, and the style so perfectly *Sanskrit*, or *Polished*, that the book must be more modern than the scriptures of MOSES, in which the simplicity, or rather nakedness, of the *Hebrew* dialect, metre, and style, must convince every unbiased man of their superior antiquity.

I leave etymologists, who decide every thing, to decide whether the word MENU, or, in the nominative case, MENUS, has any connexion with MINOS, the Lawgiver, and supposed son of Jove : the *Cretans*, according to DIODORUS of *Sicily*, used to feign, that most of the great men who had been deified, in return for the benefits which they had conferred on mankind, were born in their island ; and hence a doubt may be raised, whether MINOS was really a *Cretan*. The *Indian* legislator was the first, not the

seventh, MENU, or SATAYAVRATA, whom I suppose to be the SATURN of *Italy*: part of SATURN's character, indeed, was that of a great lawgiver,

Qui genus indocile ac dispersum montibus altis
Composuit, *legesque dedit*,

and, we may suspect, that all the fourteen MENUS are reducible to one, who was called NUH by the *Arabs*, and probably by the *Hebrews*, though we have disguised his name by an improper pronunciation of it. Some near relation between the seventh MENU and the *Grecian* MINOS, may be inferred from the singular character of the *Hindu* God, YAMA, who was also a child of the Sun, and thence named VAIVASWATA: he had to the same title with his brother, SRA'DDHADE'VA; another of his titles was DHER-MARA'JA, or *King of Justice*; and a third, PITRIPETI, or *Lord of the Patriarchs*; but he is chiefly distinguished as *judge of departed souls*; for the *Hindus* believe, that, when a soul leaves its body, it immediately repairs to *Yamapur*, or the city of YAMA, where it receives a just sentence from him, and either ascends to *Swarga*, or the first heaven, or is driven down to *Narac*, the region of serpents, or assumes on earth the form of some animal, unless its offence had been such, that it ought to be condemned to a vegetable, or even to a mineral, prison. Another of his names is very remarkable: I mean that of CA'LA, or *time*, the idea of which is intimately blended with the characters of SATURN and of ΝΟΛΗ; for the name CRONOS has a manifest affinity with the word *chronos*, and a learned follower of ZERA'TUSHT assures me, that, in the books, which the *Behdins* hold sacred, mention is made of an *universal inundation*, there named the deluge of TIME.

It having been occasionally observed, that CERES was the poetical daughter of SATURN, we cannot close this head without adding, that the *Hindus* also have their *Goddess of Abundance*, whom they usually call LACSHMI', and whom they consider as the daughter (not of MENU, but) of BHIRIGU, by whom the first Code of sacred ordinances was promulgated: she is also named PEDMA' and CAMALA' from the sacred Lotos or *Nymphaea*; but

her most remarkable name is *Sri*', or, in the first case, *SRI*'s, which has a resemblance to the *Latin*, and means *fortune* or *prosperity*. It may be contended, that, although *LACSHMI*' may be figuratively called the *CERES* of *Hindustan*, yet any two or more idolatrous nations, who subsisted by agriculture, might naturally conceive a Deity to preside over their labours, without having the least intercourse with each other; but no reason appears, why two nations should concur in supposing that Deity to be a female: one at least of them would more likely to imagine, that the *Earth* was a Goddess, and that the God of abundance rendered her fertile. Besides, in very ancient temples near *Gaya*', we see images of *LACSHMI*', with full breasts and a *cord* twisted under her arm like a *horn of plenty*, which look very much like the old *Grecian* and *Roman* figures of *CERES*.

The fable of *SATURN* having been thus analysed, let us proceed to his descendants; and begin, as the Poet advises, with *JUPITER*, whose supremacy, thunder, and libertinism every boy learns from *OVID*; while his great offices of Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, are not generally considered in the systems of *European* mythology. The *Romans* had, as we have before observed, many *JUPITERS*, one of whom was only the *Firmament* personified, as *ENNIIUS* clearly expresses it :

Aspice hoc sublime candens, quem invocant omnes *Jovem*.

This *JUPITER* or *DIESPITER* is the *Indian* God of the visible heavens, called *INDRA*, or the *King*, and *DIVESPETIR*, or *Lord of the Sky*, who has also the character of the *Roman* *GENIUS*, or Chief of the good spirits; but most of his epithets in *Sanskrit* are the same with those of the *Ennian* *Jove*. His consort is named *SACHI*'; his celestial city, *Ama'ravati*'; his palace, *Vaijayanta*; his garden, *Nandana*; his chief elephant, *Aira'vat*; his charioteer, *MATALI*; and his weapon, *Vajra*, or the thunderbolt: he is the regent of winds and showers, and, though the East is peculiarly under his care, yet his *Olympus* is *Méru*, or the north pole allegorically represented as a mountain of gold and gems. With all his power he is considered as a subordinate Deity, and far

inferior to the *Indian* Triad, BRAHMA', VISHNU, and MAHA'DEVA or SIVA, who are three *forms* of one and the same Godhead: thus the principal divinity of the *Greeks* and *Latins*, whom they called ZEUS and JUPITER with irregular inflexions DIOS and JOVIS, was not merely *Fulminator*, the thunderer, but, like the destroying power of *India*, MAGNUS DIVUS, ULTOR, GENITOR; like the preserving power, CONSERVATOR, SOTER, OPITULUS, ALTOR, RUMINUS, and, like the creating power, the *Giver of Life*; an attribute, which I mention here on the authority of CORNUTUS, a consummate master of mythological learning. We are devised by PLATO himself to search for the roots of *Greek* words in some barbarous, that is, foreign soil; but, since I look upon etymological conjectures as a weak basis for historical inquiries, I hardly dare suggest, that ZEV, SIV, and JOV, are the same syllable differently pronounced: it must, however be admitted, that the *Greeks* having no palatal *sigma*, like that of the *Indians*, might have expressed it by their *zéta*, and that the initial letters of *zugon* and *jugum* are (as the instance provcs) easily interchangeable.

Let us now descend, from these general and introductory remarks, to some particular observations on the resemblance of ZEUS or JUPITER to the triple divinity VISHNU, SIVA, BRAHMA'; for that is the order, in which they are expressed by the letters A, U, and M, which coalesce and form the mystical word O'M; a word, which never escapes the lips of a pious *Hindu*, who meditates on it in silence: whether the *Egyptian* ON, which is commonly supposed to mean the Sun, be the *Sanscrit* monosyllable, I leave others to determine. It must always be remeindered, that the learned *Indians*, as they are instructed by their own books, in truth acknowledge only One Supreme Being, whom they call BRAHME, or THE GREAT ONE in the neuter gender: they believe his Essence to be infinitely removed from the comprehension of any mind but his own; and they suppose him to manifest his power by the operation of his divine spirit, whom they name VISHNU, the *Pervader*, and NA'RA'YAN, or *Moving on the waters*, both in the masculine gender, whence he is often denominated the *First Male*; and by this power they believe, that the

whole order of nature is preserved and supported ; but the *Ve-dāntis*, unable to form a distinct idea of brute matter independent of mind, or to conceive that the work of Supreme Goodness was left a moment to itself, imagine that the Deity is ever present to his work, and constantly supports a series of perceptions, which, in one sense, they call *illusory*, though they cannot but admit the *reality* of all created forms, as far as the happiness of creatures can be affected by them. When they consider the divine power exerted in *creating*, or in giving existence to that which existed not before, they called the deity BRAHMA' in the masculine gender also ; and, when they view him in the light of *Destroyer*, or rather *Changer* of forms, they give him a thousand names, of which SIVA, īSA or īSWARA, RUDRA, HARA, SAMBU, and MAHADE'VA or MAHE'SA, are the most common. The first operations of these three *Powers* are variously described in the different *Pura'na's* by a number of allegories, and from them we may deduce the *Ionian* Philosophy of *primeval water*, the doctrine of the Mundane Egg, and the veneration paid to the *Nympha*, or *Lotos*, which was anciently revered in *Egypt*, as it is at present in *Hindustān*, *Tibet*, and *Nepal* : the *Tibetians* are said to embellish their temples and altars with it, and a native of *Nepal* mode prostrations before it on entering my study, where the fine plant and beautiful flowers lay for examination. Mr. HOLWEL, in explaining his first plate, supposes BRAHMA' to be floating on a leaf of *betel* in the midst of the abyss ; but it was manifestly intended by a bad painter for a lotos-leaf or for that of the *Indian* fig-tree ; nor is the species of pepper, known in *Bengal* by the name of *Tāmbu'la*, and on the Coast of *Malabar* by that of *bete'*, held sacred, as he asserts, by the *Hindus*, or necessarily cultivated under the inspection of *Brahmans* ; though, as the vines are tender, all the plantations of them are carefully secured, and ought to be cultivated by a particular tribe of *Sū'dras*, who are thence called *Tāmbu'li's*.

That *water* was the primitive element and first work of the Creative Power, is the uniform opinion of the *Indian* Philosophers ; but, as they give so particular an account of the general

deluge and of the Creation, it can never be admitted, that their whole system arose from traditions concerning the flood only, and must appear indubitable, that their doctrine is in part borrowed from the opening of *Bira'sit* or *Genesis*, than which a subblimer passage, from the first word to the last, never flowed or will flow from any human pen : “*In the beginning* God created the heavens and the earth.—And the earth was void and waste, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God *moved upon* the face of the waters; and God said : *Let Light be*—and *Light was.*” The sublimity of this passage is considerably diminished by the *Indian* paraphrase of it, with which MENU, the son of BRAHMA', begins his address to the sages, who consulted him on the formation of the universe : “This world, says he, was all darkness, undiscernible, undistinguishable, altogether as in a profound sleep ; till the self-existent invisible God, making it manifest with five elements and other glorious forms, perfectly dispelled the gloom. He, desiring to raise up various creatures by an emanation from his own glory, first created the *waters*, and impressed them with a power of motion : by that power was produced a golden Egg, blazing like a thousand suns, in which was born BRAHMA', self-existing, the great parent of all rational beings. The waters are called *na'ra'*, since they are the offspring of NERA (or *iswara*) ; and thence was *NA'RA'YANA* named, because his first *ayana* or *moving*, was on them.

THAT WHICH IS, the invisible cause, eternal, self-existing, but unperceived, becoming masculine *from neuter*, is celebrated among all creatures by the name of BRAHMA'. That God, having dwelled in the Egg, through revolving years, Himself meditating on Himself, divided it into two equal parts ; and from those halves formed the heavens and the earth, placing in the midst the subtil ether, the eight points of the world, and the permanent receptacle of waters.”

To this curious description, with which the *Ma'nava Sa'stra* begins, I cannot refrain from subjoining the four verses, which are the text of the *Bha'gavat*, and are believed to have been pro-

nounced by the Supreme Being to BRAHMA : the following version is most scrupulously literal.*

“ Even I was even at first, not any other thing ; that, which exists, unperceived ; supreme : afterwards I AM THAT WHICH IS ; and he, who must remain, am I.

Except the FIRST CAUSE, whatever may appear, and may not appear, in the mind, know that to be the mind’s MAYA (or *Delusion*), as light, as darkness.

As the great elements are in various beings, entering, yet not entering, (that is, pervading, not destroying), thus am I in them, yet not in them.

Even thus far may inquiry be made by him, who seeks to know the principle of mind, in union and separation, which must be EVERY WHERE ALWAYS.”

Wild and obscure as these ancient verses must appear in a naked verbal translation, it will perhaps be thought by many, that the poetry or mythology of *Greece* or *Italy* afford no conceptions more awfully magnificent : yet the brevity and simplicity of the *Mosaic* diction are unequalled.

As to the creation of the world, in the opinion of the *Romans*, OVID, who might naturally have been expected to describe it with learning and elegance, leaves us wholly in the dark, *which of the Gods was the actor in it* : other Mythologists are more explicit ; and we may rely on the authority of CORNUTUS, that the old

* श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अहमेवासमेवाये नान्यदात् सदस्त् यरम् ।

पशादहं यदेतज्ज योवशिष्येत सोऽस्मै ॥

ऋतेर्य यत् प्रतोयेत न प्रतीयेत चात्मनि ।

तद्विद्यादाक्षो मायां यथा भासो यथात्मः ॥

यथा महांति भूतानि भूतेषूच्चावचेष्टु ।

प्रविद्वान्यप्रविद्वानि तथा तेषु न तेष्वहं ॥

एतावदेव जिज्ञास्यं तत्त्वज्ञज्ञात्मनः ।

अन्यद व्यतिरेकाभ्यां यत् स्थान् चर्वत् चर्वदा ॥

European heathens considered Jove (not the son of SATURN, but of the *Ether*, that is of an unknown parent) as the great *Life-giver*, and *Father of Gods and men*; to which may be added the *Orphean* doctrine, preserved by PROCLUS, that “the abyss and empyreum, the earth and sea, the Gods and Goddesses, were produced by ZEUS or JUPITER.” In this character he corresponds with BRAHMA'; and, perhaps, with that God of the *Babylonians* (if we can rely on the accounts of their ancient religion), who, like BRAHMA', reduced the universe to order, and, like BRAHMA', *lost his head*, with the blood of which new animals were instantly formed: I allude to the common, story, the meaning of which I cannot discover, that BRAHMA' had five heads till one of them was cut off by NĀ'RĀ'YĀ'N.

That, in another capacity, Jove was the *Helper* and *Supporter* of all, we may collect from his old *Latin* epithets, and from CICERO, who informs us, that his usual name is a contraction of *Juvans Pater*; an etymology, which shows the idea entertained of his character, though we may have some doubt of its accuracy. CALLIMACHUS, we know, addresses him as *the bestower of all good, and of security from grief*; and, *since neither wealth without virtue, nor virtue without wealth, give complete happiness*, he prays, like a wise poet, for both. An *Indian* prayer for riches would be directed to LACSHMI', the wife of VISHNU, since the *Hindu* Goddesses are believed to be the *powers* of their respective lords: as to CUVERA, the *Indian* PLUTUS, one of whose names in *Paulastya*, he is revered, indeed, as a magnificent Deity, residing in the palace of *Alaca'*, or borne through the sky in a splendid car named *Pushpaca*, but is manifestly subordinate, like the other seven Genii, to the three principal Gods, or rather to the principal God considered in three capacities. As the soul of the world, or the pervading *mind*, so finely described by VIRGIL, we see Jove represented by several *Roman* poets; and with great sublimity by LUCAN in the known speech of CATO concerning the *Ammonian* oracle, “JUPITER is, wherever we look, wherever we move.” This is precisely the *Indian* idea of VISHNU, according to the four verses above exhibited, not that the *Brahmans* imagine their male Divinity to be the *divine Essence* of the great one, which

they declare to be wholly incomprehensible; but, since the power of *preserving* created things by a superintending providence, belongs eminently to the Godhead, they hold that power to exist transcendently in the *preserving* member of the Triad, whom they suppose to be **EVERY WHERE ALWAYS**, not in substance, but in spirit and energy: here, however, I speak of the *Vaishnava's*; for the *Siava's* ascribe a sort of pre-eminence to **SIVA**, whose attributes are now to be concisely examined.

It was in the capacity of Avenger and Destroyer, that Jove encountered and overthrew the *Titans* and Giants, whom **TYPHON**, **BRIAREUS**, **TITIUS**, and the rest of their fraternity, led against the God of *Olympus*; to whom an Eagle brought *lightning* and *thunderbolts* during the warfare: thus, in a similar contest between **SIVA** and the *Daityas*, or children of **DITI**, who frequently rebelled against heaven, **BRAHMA** is believed to have presented the God of Destruction with *fiery shafts*. One of the many poems, entitled *Ra'ma'yan*, the last book of which has been translated into *Italian*, contains an extraordinary dialogue between the crow *Bhushunda*, and a rational Eagle, named **GARUDA**, who is often painted with the face of a beautiful youth, and the body of an imaginary bird; and one of the eighteen *Pura'nas* bears his name and comprises his whole history. M. SONNERAT informs us, that **VISHNU** is represented in some places riding on the **GARUDA**, which he supposes to be the *Pondicheri* Eagle of BRISSON, especially as the *Brahmans* of the Coast highly venerate that class of birds and provide food for numbers of them at stated hours: I rather conceive the *Garuda* to be a fabulous bird, but agree with him, that the *Hindu* God, who rides on it, resembles the ancient **JUPITER**. In the old temples at *Gayà*, **VISHNU** is either mounted on this poetical bird or attended by it together with a little page; but, lest an etymologist should find **GANYMED** in **GARUD**, I must observe that the *Sanskrit* word is pronounced *Garura*; though I admit, that the *Grecian* and *Indian* stories of the celestial bird and the page appear to have some resemblance. As the *Olympian* **JUPITER** fixed his Court and held his Councils on a lofty and brilliant mountain, so the appropriated seat of **MAHA'DE'VA**, whom the

Saiva's consider as the Chief of the *De*cities, was mount *Cailása*, every splinter of whose rocks was an inestimable gem: his terrestrial haunts and the snowy hills of *Himálaya*, or that branch of them to the East of the *Brahmaputra*, which has the name of *Chandrasic'hara*, or the *Mountain of the Moon*. When, after all these circumstances, we learn that *SIVA* is believed to have *three* eyes, whence he is named also *TRILÓCHAN*, and know from *PAUSANIAS*, not only that *Triophthalmos* was an epithet of *ZEUS*, but that a statue of him had been found, so early as the taking of *Troy*, with a *third eye in his forehead*, as we see him represented by the *Hindus*, we must conclude, that the identity of the two Gods falls little short of being demonstrated.

In the character of *Destroyer* also we may look upon this *Indian* Deity as corresponding with the *Stygian Jove*, or *PLUTO*; especially since *CA'LI'*, or *Time* in the feminine gender, is a name of his consort, who will appear hereafter to be *PROSERPINE*: indeed, if we can rely on a *Persian* translation of the *Bhágavat* (for the original is not yet in my possession), the sovereign of *Pa'ta'la*, or the *Infernal Regions*, is the *King of Serpents*, named *SE'SHANA'GA*; for *CRISHNA* is there said to have descended with his favourite *ARJUN* to the seat of that formidable divinity, from whom he instantly obtained the favour, which he requested, that the souls of a *Bráhman's* six sons, who had been slain in battle, might reanimate their respective bodies; and *SE'SHANA'GA* is thus described: “He had a gorgeous appearance, with a thousand heads, and, on each of them, a crown set with resplendent gems, one of which was larger and brighter than the rest; his eyes gleamed like flaming torches; but his neck, his tongues, and his body were black; the skirts of his habiliment were yellow, and a sparkling jewel hung in every one of his ears; his arms were extended, and adorned with rich bracelets, and his hands bore the holy shell, the radiated weapon, the mace for war, and the lotos.” Thus *PLUTO* was often exhibited in painting and sculpture with a diadem and sceptre; but himself and his equipage were of the blackest shade.

There is yet another attribute of *MAHÁDE'VA*, by which he is

too visibly distinguished in the drawings and temples of *Bengal*. To destroy, according to the *Véda'nti's* of *India*, the *Sûsi's* of *Persia*, and many Philosophers of our *European* schools, is only to *generate* and *reproduce* in another form: hence the God of *Destruction* is holden in this country to preside over *Generation*; as a symbol of which he rides on a *white bull*. Can we doubt, that the loves and seats of *JUPITER GENITOR* (not forgetting the *white bull* of *EUROPA*) and his extraordinary title of *LAPIS*, for which no satisfactory reason is commonly given, have a connexion with the *Indian* Philosophy and Mythology? As to the deity of *Lampsacus*, he was originally a mere scare-crow, and ought not to have a place in any mythological system; and, in regard to *BACCHUS*, the God of *Vintage* (between whose acts and those of *JUPITER* we find, as *BACON* observes, a wonderful affinity), his *Ithyphallick* images, measures, and ceremonies alluded probably to the supposed relation of Love and Wine; unless we believe them to have belonged originally to *SIVA*, one of whose names is *Va'gis* or *BA'GI's*, and to have been afterwards improperly applied. Though, in an *Essay* on the Gods of *India*, where the *Bra'hmans* are positively forbidden to taste fermented liquors, we can have little to do with *BACCHUS*, as God of Wine, who was probably no more than the imaginary President over the vintage in *Italy*, *Greece*, and the lower *Asia*, yet we must not omit *SURA'DE'ví*, the Goddess of Wine, who arose, say the *Hindus*, from the ocean, when it was churned with the mountain *Mandar*: and this fable seems to indicate, that the *Indians* came from a country, in which wine was anciently made and considered as a blessing; though the dangerous effects of intemperance induced their early legislators to prohibit the use of all spirituous liquors; and it were much to be wished, that so wise a law had never been violated.

Here may be introduced the *JUPITER Marinus*, or *NEPTUNE*, of the *Romans*, as resembling *MĀHA'DE'VA* in his *generative* character; especially as the *Hindu* God is the husband of *BHĀVĀNI'*, whose relation to the *waters* is evidently marked by her image being restored to them at the conclusion of her great festival called *Durga'tsava*: she is known also to have attributes exactly

similar to those of VENUS *Marina*, whose birth from the sea-foam and splendid rise from the Conch, in which she had been cradled, have afforded so many charming subjects to ancient and modern artists; and it is very remarkable, that the REMBHA' of INDRA's court, who seems to correspond with the popular VENUS, or Goddess of Beauty, was produced, according to the *Indian* Fabulists, from the froth of the churned ocean. The identity of the *tris'ula* and the *trident*, the weapon of SIVA and of NEPTUNE, seems to establish this analogy; and the veneration paid all over *India* to the large buccinum, especially when it can be found with the spiral line and mouth turned from left to right, brings instantly to our mind the music of TRITON. The Genius of Water is VARUNA; but he, like the rest, is far inferior to MAHE'S'A, and even to INDRA, who is the Prince of the beneficent genii.

This way of considering the Gods as individual substances, but as distinct persons in distinct characters, is common to the *European* and *Indian* systems; as well as the custom of giving the highest of them the greatest number of names: hence, not to repeat what has been said of JUPITER, came the triple capacity of DIANA; and hence her petition in CALLIMACHUS, that she might be *polyonymous* or *many-titled*. The consort of SIVA is more eminently marked by these distinctions than those of BRAHMA' or VISHNU: she resembles the ISIS *Myrionymos*, to whom an ancient marble, described by GRUTER, is dedicated; but her leading names and characters are PA'R'VATI, DURGA', BHAVA'NI.

As the *Mountain-born* Goddess, or PA'R'VATI, she has many properties of the *Olympian* JUNO: her majestic deportment, high spirit, and general attributes are the same; and we find her both on Mount *Caila'sa*, and at the banquets of the Deities, uniformly the companion of her husband. One circumstance in the parallel is extremely singular: she is usually attended by her son CA'RTICE'YA, who rides on a *peacock*; and, in some drawings, his own robe seems to be spangled with eyes; to which must be added that, in some of her temples, a *peacock*, without a rider, stands near her image. Though CA'RTICE'YA, with his six faces and numerous eyes bears some resemblance to ARGUS, whom JUNO employed as her

principal wardour, yet, as he is a Deity of the second class, and the Commander of celestial Armies, he seems clearly to be the ORUS of *Egypt* and the MARS of *Italy*: his name SCANDA, by which he is celebrated in one of the *Pura'nas*, has a connexion I am persuaded, with the old SECANDER of *Persia*, whom the poets ridiculously confound with the *Macedonian*.

The attributes of D'URGA', or *Difficult of access*, are also conspicuous in the festival above-mentioned, which is called by her name, and in this character she resembles MINERVA, not the peaceful inventress of the fine and useful arts, but PALLAS, armed with a helmet and spear: both represent heroic *Virtue*, or Valour united with Wisdom; both slew Demons and Giants with their own hands, and both protected the wise and virtuous, who paid them due adoration. As PALLAS, they say, takes her name from *vibrating* a lance, and usually appears in complete armour, thus CURIS, the old *Latian* word for a spear, was one of JUNO's titles, and so, if GIRALDUS be correct was HOPLOSMIA, which at *Elies*, it seems, meant a female dressed in panoply or complete accoutrements. The *unarmed* MINERVA of the *Romans* apparently corresponds, as patroness of Science and Genius, with SERESWATI the wife of BRAHMA', and the emblem of his principal *Creative Power*: both goddesses have given their names to celebrated grammatical works; but the *Sa'rescata* of SARU'PA'CHA'RYA is far more concise as well as more useful and agreeable than the *Minerva* of SANCTIUS. The MINERVA of *Italy* invented the *flute*, and SERESWATI presides over melody: the protectress of *Athens* was even, on the same account, surnamed MUSICE'.

Many learned Mythologists, with GIRALDUS at their head, consider the peaceful MINERVA as the ISIS of *Egypt*; from whose temple at *Sais* a wonderful inscription is quoted by PLUTARCH, which has a resemblance to the four *Sanscrit* verses above exhibited as the text of the *Bha'gavat*: "I am all that hath been, and is and shall be; and my veil no mortal hath ever removed." For my part I have no doubt, that the ISWARA and ISI of the *Hindus* are the OSIRIS and ISIS of the *Egyptians*; though a distinct essay in the manner of PLUTARCH would be requisite in order to

demonstrate their identity: they mean, I conceive, the *Powers of Nature* considered as Male and Female; and ISIS, like the other goddesses, represents the active power of her lord, whose *eight* forms, under which he becomes visible to man, were thus enumerated by CALIDASA near two thousand years ago: “ *Water* was the first work of the Creator; and *Fire* receives the oblation of clarified butter, as the law ordains; the *Sacrifice* is performed with solemnity; the *two Lights* of heaven distinguish time; the subtil *Ether*, which is the vehicle of sound, pervades the universe; the *Earth* is the natural parent of all increase; and by *Air* all things breathing are animated: may ISA, the *power* propitiously apparent in these eight forms, bless and sustain you !” The *five* elements, therefore, as well as the Sun and Moon, are considered as ISA or the *Ruler*, from which word ISÍ may be regularly formed, though ISWARÍ be the usual name of his *active Power*, adored as the Goddess of Nature. I have not yet found in *Sanscrit* the wild, though poetical, tale of IO; but am persuaded, that, by means of the *Pura'nas*, we shall in time discover all the learning of the *Egyptians* without decyphering their hieroglyphics: the bull of ISWARA seems to be APIS, or AR, as he is more correctly named in the true reading of a passage in JEREMIAH; and, if the veneration shown both in *Tibet* and *India* to so amiable and useful a quadruped as the Cow, together with the *generation* of the LAMA himself, have not some affinity with the religion of *Egypt* and the idolatry of *Israël*, we must at least allow that circumstances have wonderfully coincided. BHAVANÍ now demands our attention; and in this character I suppose the wife of MAHÁDÉVA to be as well the JUNO *Cinxia* or LUCINA of the *Romans* (called also by them DIANA *Solvizona* and by the *Greeks* ILITHYIA) as VENUS herself; not the *Idalian* queen of laughter and jollity, who, with her Nymphs and Graces, was the beautiful child of poetical imagination, and answers to the *Indian* REMBHA' with her celestial train of *Apsara's* or damsels of paradise; but VENUS *Urania*, so luxuriantly painted by LUCRETIUS, and so properly invoked by him at the opening of a poem on nature; VENUS, presiding over *generation*, and, on that account, exhibited sometimes of both

sexes (an union very common in the *Indian* sculptures), as in her bearded statue at *Rome*, in the images perhaps called *Hermathena*, and in those figures of her, which had the forms of a *conical marble*; “for the reason of which figure we are left, says *TACITUS*, in the dark:” the reason appears to clearly in the temples and paintings of *Hindustan*; where it never seems to have entered the heads of the legislators or people that any thing natural could be offensively obscene; a singularity, which pervades all their writings and conversation, but is no proof of depravity in their morals. Both *PLATO* and *CICERO* speak of *Eros*, or the Heavenly *CUPID*, as the son of *VENUS* and *JUPITER*; which proves, that the monarch of *Olympus* and the Goddess of Fecundity were connected as *MAHA'DE'VA* and *BHAVA'NI*: the God *CA'MA*, indeed, had *MA'YA'* and *CASYAPA*, or *Uranus*, for his parents, at least according to the Mythologists of *Cashmir*; but in most respects, he seems the twin-brother of *CUPID* with richer and more lively appendages. One of his many epithets is *Dipaca*, the *Inflamer*, which is erroneously written *Dipuc*; and I am now convinced, that the sort of resemblance, which has been observed between his *Latin* and *Sanscrit* names, is accidental: in each name the three first letters are the *root*, and between them there is no affinity. Whether any Mythological connection subsisted between the *amaracus*, with the fragrant leaves of which *HYMEN* bound his temples, and the *tulasi'* of *India*, must be left undetermined: the botanical relation of the two plants (if *amaracus*, be properly translated *marjoram*) is extremely near.

One of the most remarkable ceremonies, in the festival of the *Indian* Goddess, is that before-mentioned of casting her image into the river: the *Pandits*, of whom I inquired concerned its origin and import, answered, “that it was prescribed by the *Veda*, they knew not why;” but this custom has, I conceive, a relation to the doctrine, that *water* is a *form* of *isWARA*, and consequently of *isa'ni*, who is even represented by some as the patroness of that element, to which her figure is restored, after having received all due honours on *earth*, which is considered as another *form* of the God of Nature, though subsequent, in the order of

Creation, to the primeval fluid. There seems no decisive proof of one original system among idolatrous nations in the worship of river-gods and river-goddesses, nor in the homage paid to their streams, and the ideas of purification annexed to them: since *Greeks*, *Italians*, *Egyptians*, and *Hindu* might (without any communication with each other) have adored the several divinities of their great rivers, from which they derived pleasure, health, and abundance. The notion of Doctor MUSGRAVE, that large rivers were supposed, from their strength and rapidity, to be conducted by Gods, while rivulets only were protected by female deities, is, like most other notions of Grammarians on the genders of nouns, overthrown by facts. Most of the great *Indian* rivers are feminine; and the three goddesses of the waters, whom the *Hindus* chiefly venerate, are *GANGA*', who sprang, like armed *PALLAS*, from the head of the *Indian Jove*; *YAMUNA*', daughter of the Sun, and *SERESWATI*': all three meet at *Praya'ga* thence called *Trivéni*, or *the three plaited locks*; but *SERESWATI*', according to the popular belief, sinks under ground, and rises at another *Trivéni* near *Hugli*, where she rejoins her beloved *GANGA*'. The *Brahmaputra* is, indeed, a male river; and, as his name signifies the Son of *BRAHMA*', I thence took occasion to feign that he was married to *GANGA*', though I have not yet seen any mention of him, and a God, in the *Sanskrit* books.

Two incarnate deities of the first rank, *RAMA* and *CRISHNA*, must now be introduced, and their several attributes distinctly explained. The first of them, I believe, was the *DIONYSOS* of the *Greeks*, whom they named *BROMIUS*, without knowing why, and *BUGENES*, when they represented him *horned*, as well as *LYAIOS* and *ELEUTHERIOS*, the *Deliverer*, and *TRIAMBOS* or *DITHYRAMBOS*, the *Triumphant*: most of titles were adopted by the *Romans*, by whom he was called *BRUMA*, *TAURIFORMIS*, *LIBER*, *TRIUMPHUS*; and both nations had records or traditional accounts of his *giving laws* to men and deciding their contests, of his improving navigation and commerce, and, what may appear yet more observable, of his conquering *India* and other countries with an army of *Satyrs*, commanded by no less a personage than

PAN ; whom LILIUS GIRALDUS, on what authority I know not, asserts to have resided in *Iberia*, “when he had returned, says the learned Mythologist, from the *Indian* war, in which he accompanied BACCHUS.” It were superfluous in a mere essay, to run any length in the parallel between this *European* God and the sovereign of *Ayodhya'*, whom the *Hindus* believe to have been an appearance on earth of the *Preserving Power* ; to have been a Conqueror of the highest renown, and the Deliverer of nations from tyrants, as well as of his consort SÍTA' from the giant RA'VAN, king of *Lanca'* and to have commanded in chief a numerous and intrepid race of those large *Monkeys*, which our naturalists, or some of them, have denominated *Indian* Satyrs : his General, the Prince of Satyrs, was named HANUMAT, or *with high cheek-bones* ; and, with workmen of such agility, he soon raised a bridge of rocks over the sea, part of which, say the *Hindus*, yet remains ; and it is, probably, the series of rocks, to which the *Muselmans* or the *Portuguese* have given the foolish name of ADAM's (it should be called RA'MA's) bridge. Might not this army of Satyrs have been only a race of mountaineers, whom RA'MA, if such a monarch ever existed, had civilized ? However that may be, the large breed of *Indian* Apes is at this moment held in high veneration by the *Hindus*, and fed with devotion by the *Brahmans*, who seem, in two or three places on the banks of the *Ganges*, to have a regular endowment for the support of them : they live in tribes of three or four hundred, are wonderfully gentle (I speak as an eye-witness), and appear to have some kind of order and subordination in their little sylvan polity. We must not omit, that the father of *Hanumat* was the God of Wind, named PAVAN, one of the eight Genii ; and, as PAN improved the pipe by adding six reeds, and “played exquisitely on the cithern a few moments after his birth,” so one of the four systems of *Indian* music bears the name of HANUMAT, or HANUMA'N in the nominative, as its inventor, and is now in general estimation.

The war of *Lanca'* is dramatically represented at the festival of RA'MA on the ninth day of the new moon of *Chaitra* ; and the

drama concludes (says HOLWEL, who had often seen it) with an exhibition of the fire-ordeal, by which the victor's wife SÍTA' gave proof of her connubial fidelity : "the dialogue, he adds, is taken from one of the Eighteen holy books," meaning, I suppose, the *Pura'nas*; but the *Hindus* have a great number of regular dramas at least two thousand years old, and among them are several very fine ones on the story of RA'MA. The first poet of the *Hindus* was the great VA'LMÍC, and his *Ra'ma'yan* is an Epic Poem on the same subject, which, in unity of action, magnificence of imagery, and elegance of style, far surpasses the learned and elaborate work of NONNUS, entitled *Dionysiaca*, half of which, or twenty-four books, I perused with great eagerness, when I was very young, and should have travelled to the conclusion of it, if other pursuits had not engaged me: I shall never have leisure to compare the *Dionysiaca* with the *Ra'ma'yan*, but am confident, that an accurate comparison of the two poems would prove DIONYSOS and RA'MA to have been the same person; and I incline to think, that he was RA'MA, the son of CU'SH, who might have established the first regular government in this part of *Asia*. I had almost forgotton, that *Meros* is said by the *Greeks* to have been a mountain of *India*, on which their DIONYSOS was born, and that *Méru*, though it generally means the north pole in the *Indian* geography, is also a mountain near the city of *Naishada* or *Nysa*, called by the *Grecian* geographers *Dionysopolis*, and universally celebrated in the *Sanscrit* poems; though the birth place of RA'MA is supposed to have been *Ayódhyà* or *Audh*. That ancient city extended, if we believe the *Brahmans*, over a line of ten *Yojans*, or about forty miles, and the present city of *Lac'hna*, pronounced *Lucnow*, was only a lodge for one of its gates, called *Lacshmanadivára*, or the gate of LACSHIMAN, a brother of RA'MA: M. SONNERAT supposes *Ayódhyá* to have been *Siam*; a most erroneous and unfounded supposition! which would have been of little consequence, if he had not grounded an argument on it, that RA'MA was the same person with BUDDHA, who must have appeared many centuries after the conquest of *Lancá*.

The second great divinity, CRISHNA, passed a life, according to the *Indians*, of a most extraordinary and incomprehensible nature. He was the son of De'vací by VASUD'EVA ; but his birth was concealed through fear of the tyrant CANSA, to whom it had been predicted, that a child born at that time in that family would destroy him : he was fostered, therefore, in *Mat'hura'* by an honest herdsman, surnamed ANANDA, or *Happy*, and his amiable wife YASO'DA', who, like another PALES, was constantly occupied in her pastures and her dairy. In their family were a multitude of young *Gópa*'s or *Cowherds*, and beautiful *Gópi*'s, or *milkmaids*, who were his playfellows during his infancy ; and, in his early youth, he selected *nine* damsels as his favourites, with whom he passed his gay hours in dancing, sporting, and playing on his flute. For the remarkable number of his *Gópi*'s I have no authority but a whimsical picture, where *nine* girls are grouped in the form of an elephant, on which he sits and pipes ; and, unfortunately, the word *nava* signifies both *nine* and *new* or *young* ; so that, in the following stanza, it may admit of two interpretations :

*taran'ijápulinè navaballari
perisada' saha célicutu'hala't
drutavilamwítacha'ruiha'rinam
heri'maham hri'dayéna sadu'rahé.*

“ I bear in my bosom continually that God, who, for sportive recreation with a train of *nine* (young) dairy-maids, dances gracefully, now quick now slow, on the sands just left by the Daughter of the Sun.”

Both he and the three RA'MAS are described as youths of perfect beauty ; but the princesses of *Hindusta'n*, as well as the damsels of NANDA's farm, were passionately in love with CRISHNA, who continues to this hour the darling God of the *Indian* women. The sect of *Hindus*, who adore him with enthusiastic, and almost exclusive, devotion, have broached a doctrine, which they maintain with eagerness, and which seems general in these provinces ; that he was distinct from all the *Avata'rs*, who had

only an *ansa*, or portion, of his divinity ; while CRISHNA was the *person* of VISHNU himself in a human form : hence they consider the third RA'MA, his elder brother, as the eighth *Avata'r* invested with an *emanation* of his divine radiance ; and, in the principal *Sanskrit* dictionary, compiled about two thousand years ago, CRISHNA, VA'SADE'VA, GO'VINDA, and other names of the Shepherd God, are intermixed with epithets of NA'RAYAN, or the Divine Spirit. All the *Avata'rs* are painted with gemmed *Ethiopian*, or *Parthian*, coronets ; with rays encircling their heads ; jewels in their ears ; two necklaces, one straight, and one pendant on their bosoms with dropping gems ; garlands of well-disposed many-coloured flowers, or collars of pearls, hanging down below their waists ; loose mantles of golden tissue or dyed silk, embroidered on their hems with flowers, elegantly thrown over one shoulder, and folded, like ribbands, across the breast ; with bracelets too on one arm, and on each wrist : they are naked to the waists, and uniformly with *dark azure* flesh, in allusion, probably, to the tint of that primordial fluid, on which NA'RAYAN moved in the beginning of time ; but their skirts are bright yellow the colour of the curious pericarpium in the center of the water-lily, where *Nature*, as Dr. MURRAY observes, *in some degree discloses her secrets*, each seed containing, before it germinates, a few perfect leaves : they are sometimes drawn with that flower in one hand ; a radiated elliptical ring, used as a missile weapon, in a second ; the sacred shell, or left-handed buccinum, in a third ; and a mace or battle-ax, in a fourth ; but CRISHNA, when he appears, as he sometimes does appear, among the *Avata'rs*, is more splendidly decorated than any, and wears a rich garland of sylvan flowers, whence he is named VANAMA'LI, as low as his ankles, which are adorned with strings of pearls. Dark blue, approaching to *black*, which is the meaning of the word *Crishna*, is believed to have been his complexion ; and hence the large bee of that colour is consecrated to him, and is often drawn sluttering over his head : that azure tint, which approaches to blackness, is peculiar, as we have already remarked, to VISHNU ; and hence, in the great reservoir or cistern at *Ca'tma'ndu* the capital

of *Népal*, there is placed in a recumbent posture a large well-proportioned image of *blue* marble, representing **NA'RA'YAN** floating on the waters. But let us return to the actions of **CRISHNA**; who was not less heroic, than lovely, and, when a boy, slew the terrible serpent *Ca'liya* with a number of giants and monsters: at a more advanced age, he put to death his cruel enemy **CANSA**; and, having taken under his protection the king **YUDHISHT'HIR** and the other *Pa'ndus*, who had been grievously oppressed by the *Curus*, and their tyrannical chief, he kindled the war described in the great Epic Poem, entitled the *Maha'bharat*, at the prosperous conclusion of which he returned to his heavenly seat in *Vaicon'tha*, having left the instructions comprised in the *Gità* with his disconsolate friend **ARJUN**, whose grandson became sovereign of *India*.

In this picture it is impossible not to discover, at the first glance, the features of **APOLLO**, surnamed *Nomies*, or the *Pastoral*, in *Greece*, and *Opifer* in *Italy*; who fed the herds of **ADMETUS**, and slew the serpent *Python*; a God amorous, beautiful, and warlike: the word *Gorinda* may be literally translated *Nomios*, as *Cé'sava* is *Crinitus*, or *with fine hair*; but whether *Go'pa'la*, or the *herdsman*, has any relation to *Apollo*, let our Etymologists determine. Colonel **VALLANCY**, whose learned enquiries into the ancient literature of *Ireland* are highly interesting, assures me, that *Crishna* in *Irish* means the **SUN**; and we find **APOLLO** and **SOL** considered by the *Roman* poets as the same deity: I am inclined, indeed, to believe, that not only **CRISHNA** or **VISHNU**, but even **BRAHMA** and **SIVA**, when united, and expressed by the mystical word *O'M*, were designed by the first idolaters to represent the Solar fire; but **PHÆBUS**, or the *orb of the Sun* personified, is adored by the *Indians* as the God **SU'RYA**, whence the sect, who pay him particular adoration, are called *Sauras*: their poets and painters describe his car as drawn by seven green horses, preceded by **ARUN**, or the *Dawn*, who acts as his charioteer, and followed by thousands of Genii worshipping him and modulating his praises. He has a multitude of names, and among them twelve months: those *powers* are called *Adityas*, or

sons of ADITI by CASYAPA, the *Indian* URANUS; and one of them has, according to some authorities, the name of VISHNU or *Pervader*. SŪRYA is believed to have descended frequently from his car in a human shape, and to have left a race on earth, who are equally renowned in the *Indian* stories with the *Iliadai* of *Greece*: it is very singular, that his two sons called AŚWINÍCUMĀ-RAU, in the dual, should be considered as twin-brothers, and painted like CASTOR and POLLUX, but they have each the character of AESCULAPIUS among the Gods, and are believed to have been born of a nymph, who, in the form of a mare, was impregnated with sun-beams. I suspect the whole fable of CASYAPA and his progeny to be astronomical; and cannot but imagine, that the *Greek* name CASSIOPEIA has a relation to it. Another great *Indian* family are called the *Children of the Moon*, or CHANDRA; who is a male Deity, and consequently not to be compared with ARTEMIS or DIANA; nor have I yet found a parallel in *India* for the Goddess of the *Chase* who seems to have been the daughter of an *European* fancy, and very naturally created by the invention of *Bucolic* and *Georgic* poets: yet, since the *Moon* is a *form* of ISWĀRA, the God of Nature, according to the verse of CĀLIDA'SA, and since ISĀ'NI has been shown to be his *consort* or *power*, we may consider her, in one of her characters, as LUNA; especially as we shall soon be convinced that, in the shades below, she corresponds with the HECATE of *Europe*.

The worship of Solar, or Vestal, *Fire* may be ascribed, like that of OSIRIS and ISIS, to the second source of mythology, or an enthusiastic admiration of nature's wonderful powers; and it seems, as far as I can yet understand the *Ve'das* to be the principal worship recommended in them. We have seen, that MAHA'DE'VA himself is personated by *Fire*; but, subordinate to him, is the God AGNI, often called PA'VACA, or the *Purifier*, who answers to the VULCAN of *Egypt*, where he was a Deity of high rank; and his wife SWĀ'HA' resembles the younger VESTA, or VESTIA, as the *Eolians* pronounced the *Greek* word for a *hearth*: BHAVA'NI, or VENUS, is the consort of the Supreme Destructive and Generative Power; but the *Greeks* and *Romans*, whose system is less regular

than that of the *Indians*, married her to their *divine artist*, whom they also named HEPHAISTOS and VULCAN, and who seems to be the *Indian* VISWACARMAN, the *forger of arms* for the Gods, and inventor of the *agnyastra*, or *fiery shaft*, in the war between them and the *Daiy়as* or *Titans*. It is not easy here to refrain from observing (and, if the observation give offence in *England*, it is contrary to my intention) that the newly discovered planet should unquestionably be named VULCAN ; since the confusion of analogy in the names of the planets is inelegant, unscholarly, and unphilosophical : the name URANUS is appropriated to the firmament ; but VULCAN, the slowest of the Gods, and, according to the *Egyptian* priests, the oldest of them, agrees admirably with an orb, which must perform its revolution in a very long period ; and, by giving it this denomination, we shall have seven primary planets with the names of as many *Roman* Deities, MERCURY, VENUS, TELLUS, MARS, JUPITER, SATURN, VULCAN.

It has already been intimated, that the MUSES and NYMPHS are the *Go'pya* of *Math'urā*, and of *Go'verdhan*, the *Parnassus* of the *Hindus* ; and the lyric poems of *JAYADE'VA* will fully justify this opinion ; but the *Nymphs* of *music* are the *thirty* RA'GINIS or *Female Passions*, whose various functions and properties are so richly delineated by the *Indian* painters and so finely described by the poets ; but I will not anticipate what will require a separate *Essay*, by enlarging here on the beautiful allegories of the *Hindu* in their system of musical modes, which they called RA'GA's, or *Passions*, and supposed to be Genii or Demi-gods. A very distinguished son of BRAHMA', named NARED, whose actions are the subject of a *Purāna*, bears a strong resemblance to HERMES or MERCURY : he was a wise legislator, great in arts and in arms, an eloquent messenger of the Gods either to one another or to favoured mortals, and a musician of exquisite skill ; his invention of the *Vina'*, or *Indian* lute, is thus described in the poem entitled *Ma'gha* : “NA'RED sat watching from time to time his large *Vina'*, which, by the impulse of the breeze, yielded notes, that pierced successively the regions of his ear, and proceeded by musical intervals.” The law tract, supposed

to have been revealed by NA'RED, is at this hour cited by the *Pandits*; and we cannot, therefore, believe him to have been the patron of *Thieves*; though an innocent theft of CRISHNA's cattle, by way of putting his divinity to a proof, be strangely imputed, in the *Bha'gavat*, to his father BRAHMA'.

The last of the *Greek* or *Italian* divinities, for whom we find a parallel in the Pantheon of *Indian*, is the *Stygian* or *Tauric* DIANA, otherwise named HECATE, and often confounded with PROSERPINE; and there can be no doubt of her identity with CA'LI', or the wife of SIVA in this character of the *Stygian* Jove. To this black Goddess with a collar of golden skulls, as we see her exhibited in all her principal temples, *human sacrifices* were anciently offered, as the *Ve'das* enjoined; but, in the present age, they are absolutely prohibited, as are also the sacrifices of bulls and horses: kids are still offered to her; and, to palliate the cruelty of the slaughter, which gave such offence to BUDDHA, the *Brahmans* inculcate a belief, that the poor victims rise in the heaven of INDRA, where they become the musicians of his band. Instead of the absolute, and now illegal, sacrifices of a man, a bull, and a horse, called *Nerame'dha*, *Go'me'dha*, and *As'wame'dha*, the powers of nature are thought to be propitiated by the less bloody ceremonies at the end of autumn, when the festivals of CA'LI' and LACSHMI' are solemnized nearly at the same time: now, if it be asked, how the Goddess of Death came to be united with the mild patroness of Abundance, I must propose another question, "How came PROSERPINE to be represented in the *European* system as the daughter of CERES?" Perhaps, both questions may be answered by the proposition of natural philosophers, that "the apparent destruction of a substance is the production of it in a different form." The wild music of CA'LI's priests at one of her festivals brought instantly to my recollection the *Scythian* measures of DIANA's adorers in the splendid opera of *IRIGENIA* in *Tauris*, which GLUCK exhibited at *Paris* with less genius, indeed, than art, but with every advantage that an orchestra could supply.

That we may not dismiss this assemblage of *European* and

Asiatic divinities with a subject so horrid as the altars of HECATE and CA'LU', let us conclude with two remarks, which properly, indeed, belong to the *Indian Philosophy*, with which we are not at present concerned. First; *Elysium* (not the place, but the bliss enjoyed there, in which sense MILTON uses the word) cannot but appear, as described by the poets, a very tedious and insipid kind of enjoyment: it is, however, more exalted than the temporary *Elysium* in the court of INDRA, where the pleasures, as in MOHAMMED's paradise, are wholly sensual; but the *Mucti*, or *Elysian* happiness of the *Ve'da'nta* School is far more sublime; for they represent it as a total absorption, though not such as to destroy consciousness, in the divine essence; but, for the reason before suggested, I say no more of this idea of beatitude, and forbear touching on the doctrine of transmigration and the similarity of the *Ve'da'nta* to the *Sicilian*, *Italic*, and old *Academic Schools*.

Secondly; in the mystical and elevated character of PAN, as a personification of the *universe*, according to the notion of lord BACON, there arises a sort of similitude between him and CRISHNA considered as NA'RA'YAN. The *Grecian* god plays divinely on his reed, to express, we are told, ethereal harmony; he has his attendant Nymphs of the pastures and the dairy; his face is as radiant as the sky, and his head illumined with the horns of a crescent; whilst his lower extremities are deformed and shaggy, as a symbol of the vegetables, which the earth produces, and of the beasts, who roam over the face of it: now we may compare this portrait, partly with the general character of CRISHNA, the Shepherd God, and partly with the description in the *Bha'gavat* of the divine spirit exhibited in the form of this *Universal World*; to which we may add the following story from the same extraordinary poem. The Nymphs had complained to YASO'DA', that the child CRISHNA had been drinking their curds and milk: on being reproved by his fostermother for this indiscretion, he requested her to examine his mouth; in which, to her just amazement, she beheld the whole *universe* in all its plenitude of magnificence.

ITALY, AND INDIA.

We must not be surprized at finding, on a close examination, that the characters of all the pagan deities, male and female, melt into each other, and at last into one or two ; for it seems a well founded opinion, that the whole crowd of gods and goddesses in ancient *Rome*, and modern *Va'ra'nes*, mean only the powers of nature, and principally those of the Sun, expressed in variety of ways and by a multitude of fanciful names.

Thus have I attempted to trace, imperfectly at present for want of ampler materials, but with a confidence continually increasing as I advanced, a parallel between the gods adored in three very different nations, *Greece*, *Italy*, and *India* ; but, which was the original system and which the copy, I will not presume to decide ; nor are we likely, I believe, to be soon furnished with sufficient grounds for a decision : the fundamental rule, that *natural, and most human, operations proceed from the simple to the compound*, will afford no assistance on this point ; since neither the *Asiatic* nor *European* system has any simplicity in it ; and both are so complex, not to say absurd, however intermixed with the beautiful and the sublime, that the honor, such as it is, of the invention cannot be allotted to either with tolerable certainty.

Since *Egypt* appears to have been the grand source of knowledge for the *western*, and *India* for the more *eastern*, parts of the globe, it may seem a material question, whether the *Egyptians* communicated their Mythology and philosophy to the *Hindus*, or conversely ; but what the learned of *Memphis* wrote or said concerning *India*; no mortal knows; and what the learned of *Va'ra'nes* have asserted, if any thing concerning *Egypt*, can give us little satisfaction : such circumstantial evidence on this question as I have been able to collect, shall nevertheless be stated ; because, unsatisfactory as it is, there may be something in it not wholly unworthy of notice ; though after all, whatever colonies may have come from the *Nile* to the *Ganges*, we shall, perhaps, agree at last with Mr. BRYANT, that *Egyptians*, *Indians*, *Greeks* and *Italians* proceeded originally from one central place, and that the same people carried their religion and sciences into *China* and *Japan* : may we not add, even to *Mexico* and *Peru* ?

ON THE GODS OF GREECE,

Every one knows, that the true name of *Egypt* is *Mi'sr*, spelled with a palatal sibilant both in *Hebrew* and *Arabic* : it seems in *Hebrew* to have been the proper name of the first settler in it ; and, when the *Arabs* use the word for a *great city*, they probably mean *a city like the capital of Egypt*. Father MARCO, *Roman* Missionary, who, though not a scholar of the first rate, is incapable, I am persuaded, of deliberate falsehood, lent me the last book of a *Ramayan*, which he had translated through the *Hindi* into his native language, and with it a short vocabulary of Mythological and Historical names, which had been explained to him by the *Pandits* of *Beti'ya*, where he had long resided : one of the articles in his little dictionary was, “ *Tiru't*, a town and province, in which the priests from *Egypt* settled ;” and, when I asked him, what name *Egypt* bore among the *Hindus*, he said *Mis'r*, but observed, that they sometimes confounded it with *Abyssinia*. I perceived, that his memory of what he had written was correct ; for *Mi'sr* was another word in his index, “ from which country, he said, came the *Egyptian* priests, who settled in *Tirut*.” I suspected immediately, that his intelligence flowed from the *Muselmans*, who call sugar-candy *misri* or *Egyptian* ; but, when I examined him closely, and earnestly desired him to recollect from whom he had received his information, he repeatedly and positively declared, that “ it had been given him by several *Hindus*, and particularly by a *Bra'hman*, his intimate friend, who was reputed a considerable *Pandit*, and had lived three years near his house.” We then conceived, that the seat of his *Egyptian* colony must have been *Tiro'hit*, commonly pronounced *Tirut*, and anciently called *Mit'hila* the principal town of *Janacade'sa'*, or north *Baha'r*; but MAHE'sa *Pundit*, who was born in that very district, and who submitted patiently to a long examination concerning *Mis'r*, overset all our conclusions : he denied, that the *Bra'hmans* of his country were generally surnamed *MISR*, as we had been informed ; and said, that the addition of *MISRA* to the name of *VACHESPETI*, and other learned authors, was a title formerly conferred on the writers of *miscellanies*, or *compilers* of various tracts on religion or

science, the word being derived from a root signifying to mix. Being asked, where the country of *Mis'r* was, "There are two, he answered, of that name ; one of them *in the west* under the dominion of *Muselma'ns*, and another, which all the *Sā'siras* and *Pura'nas* mention, in a mountainous region to the *north of Ayo'dhyā* :" it is evident, that by the first he meant *Egypt*, but what he meant by the second, it is not easy to ascertain. A country, called *Tiruhut* by our geographers, appears in the maps between the north-eastern frontier of *Audh* and the mountains of *Népal* ; but whether that was the *Tiru't* mentioned to father MARCO by his friend of *Betiya*, I cannot decide. This only I know with certainty, that *Misra* is an epithet of two *Bra'hmans* in the drama of *SACONTALA*, which was written near a century before the birth of CHRIST ; that some of the greatest lawyers, and two of the finest dramatic poets, of *India* have the same title ; that we hear it frequently in court added to the names of *Hindu* parties ; and that none of the *Pandits*, whom I have since consulted, pretend to know the true meaning of the word, as a proper name, or to give any other explanation of it than that it is a *surname of Bráhmans in the west*. On the account given to Colonel KYD by the old *Ra'jā* of *Crishnanagar*, "concerning traditions among the *Hindus*, that some *Egyptians* had settled in this country," I cannot rely ; because I am credidly informed by some of the *Ra'jā's* own family, that he was not a man of solid learning, though he possessed curious books, and had been attentive to the conversation of learned men : besides, I know that his son and most of his kinsmen have been dabblers in *Persian* literature, and believe them very likely, by confounding one source of information with another, to puzzle themselves and mislead those, with whom they converse. The word *Mis'r*, spelled also in *Sanscrit* with a palatial sibilant, is very remarkable ; and, as far as Etymology can help us, we may safely derive *Nilus* from the *Sanscrit* word *nīla*, or *blue* ; since DIONYSIUS expressly calls the waters of that river "an *azure stream* ;" and, if we can depend on MARCO's *Italian* version of the *Rā'ma'yan*, the name of *Nīla* is given to a lofty and sacred mountain with a summit of

pure gold, from which flowed a river of clear, sweet, and fresh water. M. SONNERAT refers to a dissertation by Mr. SCHMIT, which gained a prize at the Academy of Inscriptions, "On an *Egyptian Colony established in India*:" it would be worth while to examine his authorities, and either to overturn or verify them by such higher authorities, as are now accessible in these provinces. I strongly incline to think him right, and to believe that *Egyptian* priests have actually come from the *Nile* to the *Gangà* and *Yamundà*, which the *Bráhmans* most assuredly would never have left: they might indeed, have come either to be instructed or to instruct; but it seems more probable, that they visited the *Surmans* of *India*, as the sages of *Greece* visited them, rather to acquire than to impart knowledge; nor is it likely, that the self-sufficient *Bra'hmans* would have received them as their preceptors.

Be all this as it may, I am persuaded, that a connexion subsisted between the old idolatrous nations of *Egypt*, *India*, *Greece*, and *Italy*, long before they migrated to their several settlements, and consequently before the birth of MOSES; but the proof of this proposition will in no degree affect the truth and sanctity of the *Mosaic* History, which, if confirmation were necessary, it would rather tend to confirm. The *Divine Legate*, educated by the daughter of a king, and in all respects highly accomplished, could not but know the mythological system of *Egypt*; but he must have condemned the superstitions of that people, and despised the speculative absurdities of their priests; though some of their traditions concerning the creation and the flood were grounded on truth. Who was better acquainted with the mythology of *Athens*, than *SOCRATES*? Who more accurately versed in the Rabbinical doctrines than *PAUL*? Who possessed clearer ideas of all ancient astronomical systems than *NEWTON*, or of scholastic metaphysics than *LOCKE*? In whom could the *Romish* Church have had a more formidable opponent than in *CHILLINGWORTH*, whose deep knowledge of its tenents rendered him so competent to dispute them? In a word, who more exactly knew the abominable rites and shocking idolatry of *Canaan* than *Moses*?

himself? Yet the learning of those great men only incited them to seek other sources of truth, piety, and virtue, than those in which they had long been immersed. There is no shadow then of a foundation for an opinion, that MOSES borrowed the first nine or ten chapters of *Genesis* from the literature of *Egypt*: still less can the adamantine pillars of our *Christian* faith be moved by the result of any debates on the comparative antiquity of the *Hindus* and *Egyptians*, or of any inquiries into the *Indian* Theology. Very respectable natives have assured me, that one or two missionaries have been absurd enough, in their zeal for the conversion of the *Gentiles*, to urge, "that the *Hindus* were even now almost *Christians*, because their *BRAHMA*, *VISHNU*, and *MAHESA*, were no other then the *Christian* Trinity;" a sentence, in which we can only doubt, whether folly, ignorance, or impiety predominates. The three *Powers*, *Creative*, *Preservative*, and *Destructive*, which the *Hindus* express by the triliteral word *O'm*, were grossly ascribed by the first idolaters to the *heat*, *light*, and *flame* of their mistaken divinity, the Sun; and their wiser successors in the East, who perceived that the Sun was only a created thing, applied those powers to its creator; but the *Indian* Triad, and that of *PLATO*, which he calls the Supreme Good, the Reason, and the Soul, are infinitely removed from the holiness and sublimity of the doctrine, which pious *Christians*, have deduced from texts in the Gospel, though other *Christians*, as pious, openly prosess their dissent from them. Each sect must be justified by its own faith and good intentions: this only I mean to inculcate, that the tenet of our church cannot without profaneness be compared with that of the *Hindus*, which has only an apparent resemblance to it, but a very different meaning. One singular fact, however, must not be suffered to pass unnoticed. That the name of *CRISHNA*, and the general outline of his story, were long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of *Hom*er, we know very certainly; yet the celebrated poem, entitled *Bhágavat*, which contains a prolix account of his life, is filled with narratives of most extraordinary kind, but strangely variega-

ted and intermixed with poetical decorations : the incarnate deity of the *Sanscrit* romance was cradled, as it informs us, among *Herds-men*, but it adds, that he was educated among them, and passed his youth in playing with a party of milkmaids; a tyrant, at the time of his birth, ordered all newborn males to be slain, yet this wonderful babe was preserved by biting the breast, instead of sucking the poisoned nipple, of a nurse commissioned to kill him ; he performed, amazing but ridiculous, miracles in his infancy, and, at the age of seven years, held up a mountain on the tip up his little finger ; he saved multitudes partly by his arms and partly by his miraculous powers ; he raised the dead by descending for that purpose to the lowest regions ; he was the meekest and best-tempered of beings, washed the feet of the *Bráhmans*, and preached very nobly, indeed, and sublimely, but always in their favour ; he was pure and chaste in reality, but exhibited an appearance of excessive libertinism, and had wives or mistresses too numerous to be counted ; lastly, he was benevolent and tender, yet fomented and conducted a terrible war. This motley story must induce an opinion that the spurious Gospels, which abounded in the first age of *Christianity*, had been brought to *India*, and the wildest parts of them repeated to the *Hindus*, who ingrafted them on the old fable of *Ce'sawa*, the APOLLO of *Greece*.

As to the general extension of our pure faith in *Hindusta'n*, there are at present many sad obstacles to it. The *Muselman's* are already a sort of heterodox *Christians*: they are *Christians*, if LOCKE reasons justly, because they firmly believe the immaculate conception, divine character, and miracles of the *MESSIAH* ; but they are heterodox, in denying vehemently his character of son, and his equality, as god, with the Father, of whose unity and attributes they entertain and express the most awful ideas ; while they consider our doctrine as perfect blasphemy, and insist, that our copies of the Scriptures have been corrupted both by *Jews* and *Christians*. It will be inexpressibly difficult to undeceive them, and scarce possible to diminish their veneration for *MOHAMMED* and *ALI*, who were both very

extraordinary men, and the second, a man of unexceptionable morals : the *Kora'n* shines, indeed, with a borrowed light, since most of its beauties are taken from our Scriptures; but it has great beauties, and the *Muselma'ns* will not be convinced that they were borrowed. The *Hindus* on the other hand would readily admit the truth of the Gospel; but they contend, that it is perfectly consistent with their *Sa'stras*: the deity, they say, has appeared innumerable times, in many parts of this world and of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and though we adore him in one appearance, and they in others, yet we adore, they say, the same God, to whom our several worships, though different in form, are equally acceptable, if they be sincere in substance. We may assure ourselves, that neither *Muselma'ns* nor *Hindus* will ever be converted by any mission from the Church of *Rome*, or from any other church; and the only human mode, perhaps, of causing so great a revolution will be to translate into *Sanskrit* and *Persian* such chapters of the Prophets, particularly of *ISAIAH*, as are indisputably Evangelical, together with one of the Gospels, and a plain prefatory discourse containing full evidence of the very distant ages, in which the predictions themselves, and the history of the divine person predicted, were severally made public; and then quietly to disperse the work among the well-educated natives; with whom if in due time it failed of producing very salutary fruit by its natural influence, we could only lament more than ever the strength of prejudice, and the weakness of unassisted reason.
